

1823.

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1823.

RELIGION

SCIENCE

The Columbian Star.

The Warrior's name,
Though pealed and chimed on all the tongues of fame.

Sounds less harmonious to the grateful mind,
Than his who fashions and improves mankind....COLUMBIAN.

WASHINGTON CITY, SATURDAY MORNING, JUNE 28, 1823.

[No. 26.]

The Columbian Star.

A COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL CON-
VENTION OF THE BAPTIST DENOMINA-
TION IN THE UNITED STATES.

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Profits of the work sacred to the cause of
the Gospel, and any society for Missionary or
other purposes, or other evangelical ob-
jects, shall regularly contribute to the
cause of the General Convention, or of the
Columbian College, shall be entitled to the
Star gratis.

Communications.

For the Columbian Star.

From the "Fourth Annual Report of
the Board of Managers of the Sabbath School
Association of the First Presbyterian Church
of Washington."

In presenting to the Society, this, our
Fourth Annual Report, we shall endeavour,
as far as possible, to bring into view
some interesting fact, relative to the schools,
which may have fallen under our notice during
the past year.

According to the Secretary's Quarterly
Reports, our Association consists of three
societies: these contain 483 scholars; 63
teachers, and three superintendents. The
members vary at various seasons of the
year.

School No. 1, taught in the Session Room
of the church, consists of 164 scholars and
teachers: of the former 74 are male and
90 female; of the latter 10 are male and 13
female, the school is divided into 23 classes,
and under the direction of one superin-
tendent.

The recitations of the Senior classes were
answers from McDowell's Bible ques-
tions, 14,778 verses of Scripture: 7184 an-
swers of catechism: and 3500 verses of
Psalms. The following books were distrib-
uted by the superintendent, viz. 2 Bibles;
Testaments; 53 catechisms; 63 spelling
books; 34 hymn books; 34 primers; 41
alphabetical cards; 204 premium books,
a number of religious tracts, in all 478
various kinds.

School No. 2, taught in the Masonic
Hall, near the Navy Yard, contains 150
scholars, and 26 teachers; of the former 75
male and 75 female; of the latter, 13
male and 13 female, the whole under
the direction of one superintendent and the
superintendent; 17,620 verses of Scripture; 4575
verses of catechism, and 4370 verses of
Psalms, were recited by the Testament
classes.

The books distributed were 33 Testa-
ments; 47 catechisms; 86 spelling books;
hymn books; 69 primers; 46 alphabeti-
cal cards; and 257 premium books, in all
making a total of 58,021 verses of
Scripture, catechism and hymns recited by
the children of these schools, during the
past year; and 1072 books of various kinds dis-
tributed by the presiding managers.

School No. 3, formerly taught in Fairfax
Hall, Va. we regret to state, has been
suspended. We are informed it was chiefly
on account of the sickness that generally prevail-
ing in the neighbourhood during the last sum-
mer, together with the inconveniences
which arose from the want of system. We
trust an effort will be made on the part of
the friends, to reorganize it: but should this
not be the case, we have cause to hope that
the school seed already sown through its in-
fluence, will in due time bring forth
into eternal life.

School No. 4, for the instruction of per-
sons of colour, bond and free, is still in op-
eration. It enrolled during the past year 169
scholars, and children: of which 80 were male,
and 89 female. These received instruction
in the English language, and were supplied with books.

Considerable portions of Scripture, cate-
chism and hymns have been recited, of which
an account has been taken. An earnest de-
sire is manifested by the scholars generally
for instruction, which extends itself to the
youngest. A remarkable instance of this
was witnessed the last summer in an old wo-
man, who told one of the managers that she
had been attending the school three
years, and in this time had learned the al-
phabet, and was spelling in two syllables,
and she hoped in a little time, by per-
severance and the blessing of God, to be
able to read the Bible. May the example of
this aged daughter of Africa be a lesson for

In calling your attention to the religious
and moral improvement of our schools dur-
ing the past year, with adoring gratitude we
record the distinguished grace of God, in
having brought, we humbly trust, 9 teach-
ers, and three scholars, out of nature's dark-
ness, into the glorious light and liberty of
the gospel. These we hope are but the first
fruits of an abundant harvest yet to come.
What encouragement have we to labour
and pray for the salvation of those connected
with our schools, when we reflect how great-
ly the Lord has blessed the little that has
been done for their everlasting good!

Our teachers, for the most part, manifest
unwearied diligence and zeal, in the dis-
charge of their self denying duties. If ever
a situation required patience and persever-
ance, that of the faithful Sabbath school
teacher does; and we can truly say, that
we have amongst us not a few who display
these virtues to an eminent degree. We
speak of those teachers who have continued
in their steadfast from the beginning; whose
indefatigable labours prove that their hearts
are engaged in the work; to such it is un-
necessary for us to offer motives to persev-
erance; the living principle that abides with-
in, exciting you to every good word and
work, would far outweigh them all. We
rejoice to hail your fellow labourers in our
Lord's vineyard, and in His name and in
behalf of his cause, we call upon you to go
on. Your duties are important, your responsi-
bility great. To you in a great measure is
committed the formation of principles, the
effects of which may be as lasting as eter-
nity. Take heed then to your counsel; let it
be tried by that word which liveth and
abideth for ever; look to the Lord in that
you do for wisdom to direct, for He alone is
mighty in counsel, and in understanding in-
finite; let your manners be conciliating and
affectionate; and above all let your example
ever testify to the purity and sincerity of
your motives; remember that you are sur-
rounded by a cloud of witnesses: that the
eye of God is upon you, and that immortal
souls are committed to your care. Oh that
you may realize these things: that you may
feel them in all their importance and solemn-
ity, and look to that Divine source, from
whence alone you can receive a supply suit-
ed to all your wants, and be made the hap-
py instruments of bringing little children to the
arms of the Saviour.

A word to parents. If the souls of your
beloved offspring are precious in our sight
who are but guardians, how great should be
your concern for their eternal welfare. You
wish to see them happy, respected and use-
ful in their future relations and condition in
life, and blessed in the life to come. Have
you been faithful and unwearied in the use
of God's appointed means, to secure these
blessings to your children? Do you daily
search the scriptures, and go to a throne of
grace, for wisdom rightly to discharge your
obligations as parents? If so, are you
careful that your example accords with
your precepts—is your conduct and con-
versation, especially in their presence,
such as becometh the gospel of Christ? Do
you teach them to regard the means and
blessings of grace, as infinitely preferable to
any earthly good; and how to use these
means, so as to be instrumental to their sal-
vation? These, parents, are some of the du-
ties a gracious God has called you to dis-
charge towards your children. Now is your
seed time, and the great enemy's, too, if you
neglect to sow the good seed, he will not fail
to sow the tares. As you value then the pre-
sent and everlasting good of your offspring,
be not slothful, but diligently instil into their
minds those divine precepts, which, through
the influence of the Holy Spirit, are able to
make wise unto salvation.

For the Columbian Star.

GRANVILLE CY. N. C. June 11, 1823.

MR. EDITOR,

Encouraged by the assurance you give, in
your preface to my former communication,
that frequent hints on the same subject will
be favourably received, I transcribe for your
perusal, and, if you approve it, for publica-
tion, a letter on religious enthusiasm. It is
taken from the New Evangelical Magazine,
for March, 1818, published in London.

I am, Sir, yours, respectfully,

JOSEPH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW EVANGELICAL
MAGAZINE.

SIR,
In your number for December last a very
lucid and proper statement is given of an
apostolic injunction, 1 Cor. xiv. 30. "If any
thing be revealed to another that sitteth by,
let the first hold his peace," &c. A corre-
sponding exhibition of the meaning of another
sentence in the same connexion may be use-
ful, and serve to prevent abuses or to correct
them when they exist. The sentence is—
"The spirits of the prophets are subject to
the prophets." The obvious design of this
observation is to anticipate an objection to
the foregoing injunction. "If any thing be
revealed to another that sitteth by, let
him be silent till 'the first hold his peace,'
or have finished his discourse. The objec-
tion anticipated seems to be, that the person
could not refrain, being actuated by the Spirit
of the Lord. In opposition to this, the ap-
ostle asserts that the spirits of those really ac-
tuated by the Spirit of God were so far un-
der the guidance of discretion that they could
refrain; and that the opposite conduct could

not be ascribed to Him who is "not the author
of tumult, *anarrastias*, but of peace." This
power of discreet restraint, even in the
exercise of miraculous powers, is farther
proved by the previous command to such as
had the gift of tongues: "If any speak with
tongues, if there be no interpreter, let him
be silent in the church, and let him speak
unto God." Such silence, then, was evi-
dently in his power; and the miracu-
lous powers were means, and as such, sub-
ordinate to the ends for which they were
bestowed.

This view of the text, let "the spirits of
the apostles," &c. will teach a proper esti-
mate of the pretensions to the influences of
the Divine Spirit, which are made by vari-
ous religionists, in which the persons sup-
posed to be influenced have their bodies agi-
tated, and profess to lose all self-command.
Some religious teachers, great despisers of
what they call head-knowledge, apply their
powers much more urgently to engage the
passions, than to direct the judgments of
their hearts. When they succeed in pro-
ducing such a degree of excitement and bo-
dily agitation as cannot be concealed, the
instance is hailed as an example of conver-
sion, a triumph of the gospel, and a seal of
the preacher's ministry. Such a favour-
able view of such ecstatic agitations will soon
multiply instances, so that to be thus affect-
ed in hearing sermons, or in other religious
exercises, may become, not only a favour-
able token, but a necessary criterion of con-
version. As soon as this is the case, instan-
ces real or affected will be greatly multi-
plied; and not only at the supposed mo-
ment of conversion, but also throughout the
religious life, such attainments tend to ren-
der those who possess them accredited
saints among this class of religionists. I
have observed something allied to this, in
recitals of religious experience, in order to
join religious societies. In this case, persons
often act as if their experience were the
more estimable, the less they were able
to render a reason of their hope, and the more
incongruous it was with the constitution of
the human mind; and if any thing like a
miracle occurred, the whole became incon-
ceivably authentic! From report I am
strongly induced to believe, that something
similar occurs in the ecstasies of those de-
nominated *jumpers*. Such ecstasies have
frequently occurred, for a time, in various
religious bodies. When such disorders do
occur and are imputed to the Holy Spirit,
our text affords a refutation. "The spirits
of the prophets are subject to the prophets."
If the prophets, whilst certainly
influenced by the Spirit of God, were yet
left in possession of self-command, so that
they could be silent or speak as propriety
directed—how absurd, how arrogant, and
how profane is it for persons now, to impute
their extravagance to this Divine origin,
and to make their want of self-command
an argument in favour of their ecstasies,
while the Scripture in this text asserts the
contrary!

When pretensions are made to spiritual
attainments, we are commanded to "Try
the spirits, whether they be of God." The
Spirit, in producing his fruits, acts consis-
tently with his own dictates in the word, and
with his own work as it appears in the con-
stitution of the human mind. The constitu-
tion of the human mind originally, the re-
lations of its various operations, and the
continued upholding of this constitution, are
all the work of Him who giveth us more
wisdom and understanding than the lower
animals, and "upholdeth all things by the
word of his power." And his word never
gives us reason to think he acts on the hu-
man mind, but in congruity with its con-
stitution. It demands our assent as an axiom,
that the human mind approaches to perfec-
tion, just in proportion as it desires and
"approves the things that are excellent,"
and "follows that which is good." Depravi-
ty consists in the absence of these charac-
ters, and renovation in their restoration.

In this renovation light always precedes.
Men are renewed or "created anew," in
knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness.
The business of the first preachers of the
gospel was to "open men's eyes, and to
turn them from darkness to light, and from
the power of Satan unto God." Those
whose experience had realized this renova-
tion, and who were inspired to declare the
truth, declare the case accordingly. "He
who at first caused the light to shine out of
darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to
give the light of the knowledge of the glory
of God in the face of Jesus Christ." When
the rays of the Sun of righteousness are thus
by the Holy Spirit shed on the soul, a genial,
fruitful warmth will succeed in due propor-
tion. On the other hand, when the zeal pre-
cedes the knowledge, or exceeds it, it is sus-
picious, or vain; when the heat is derived
from any other origin than the light, it is to
be esteemed only wild-fire. When the ex-
citement of mind or agitations of body, in-
duced by religious feelings break out into
disorder, and divest of self-control, they
are not to be ascribed to the influence of the
Holy Spirit; for "the spirits of the prophe-
ts are subject to the prophets." Even
while certainly actuated by the Divine Spir-
it, one speaker could wait till another had
ended his discourse; they could do all things
decently and in order; that God did not ap-
pear the author of tumult or confusion, but of
peace and order in the meetings of the
saints.

Such mental feelings and corporeal agita-
tions may be referred to a far different ori-
gin than Divine influence. How they may

originate in one or a few instances from the
excitement of the passions, and be propagat-
ed by imitation and a desire to acquire re-
ligious attainment and character, has been
already stated. They sometimes owe their
propagation to emulation and rivalry.—
Some years ago, a unique dissenting
preacher appeared in the western high-
lands, or Islands of Scotland. He succeed-
ed remarkably in causing his hearers to cry
out, fall into fits, and tumble on the ground
while he was preaching. These appear-
ances were, for a good while, confined to
these dissenters; but after a considerable
period they were exhibited in an establish-
ed parish in one of the Islands. From this
parish, a person who seemed an adept in
crying out, falling into fits, &c. went to an-
other island on a sacramental occasion, and
there set the example, with some tempo-
rary signs of success. The same person
came to a large sea-port town on the main
land, and commenced her operations by cry-
ing out, &c. But an open-hearted sea cap-
tain, thinking it a humane office to the
sufferer, and a service to the audience,
took her in his arms, and carried her
out. When out, she was said to recover
speedily, and to rate the captain pretty
sharply for his interference. The same
person attempted a like commencement at
a sacrament time in Glasgow; but her first
essay so astonished the preacher, that he
had to pause; and his silence, in these cir-
cumstances, attracted more attention than
the stranger's noise; besides, her removal
or silence was found necessary to his pro-
ceeding. Hence her attempt, as an exam-
ple, produced no permanent effect. Thus
the attempt to propagate these, so called, in-
fluences of the Spirit has been made, but
has been unsuccessful. Some preachers (oh
tell it not in Gath,) favoured them, and de-
clared that not the occurrence of such in-
stances of agitation, but their rarity, was
matter of regret. Some of those most fa-
vourable to such extravagancies, are such
as place an extensive religious process be-
tween *unbelief and faith*—such as pre-
scribe a train of duties previously to believ-
ing the gospel; such as seem to think men
may and do "call on him in whom they
have not believed." The body of intelli-
gent Christians, however, consider Christi-
anity in the soul, as always "the spirit of
wisdom and a sound mind," and that the in-
fluences of the Holy Spirit do not imply ec-
stasies of body and mind, and the loss of self-
command. Their sentiments accord with
the principle that "the spirits of the prophe-
ts are subject to the prophets."

[In order to shorten the above essay, we
have taken the liberty to omit two or three
of the concluding paragraphs, which are not
essential to the main subject.]

For the Columbian Star.

CHARLOTTE, (Va.) June 6, 1823.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I have just read, with great pleasure, Dr.
Scott's Essay "On the Christian's im-
provement of his talent;" and as it seems
to me well calculated to be useful, I must
beg of you, for the sake of such of your read-
ers as have not access to the works of that
eminent divine, to give it a place in the
Star. I am well aware, that most persons,
in the present day, desire and expect some-
thing new; but if this essay should not be
new, it may be useful, to every one, who
may have inclination to read, and grace to
improve the instruction it contains.

THEOPHILUS.

ON THE CHRISTIAN'S IMPROVEMENT OF
HIS TALENT.

When the humble penitent has obtained
peace of conscience by faith in Christ, and
enjoys a prevailing hope of eternal life; he
will be disposed, in proportion as his views
are distinct and consistent, to inquire seri-
ously, by what means he may most effec-
tually glorify the God of his salvation, and
do the greatest good to mankind, during the
remainder of his days. For, 'the love of
Christ' in dying on the cross to deliver sin-
ners from the wrath to come, and to pur-
chase for them everlasting felicity; and in
calling him to partake of so inestimable a
blessing, will constrain him—to live no
longer to himself, but to Him who died for
him and rose again.' This will induce him
to consider very attentively, what advanta-
ges or opportunities his situation affords, of
promoting the honour of the Redeemer's
name; the peace, purity, and enlargement
of his kingdom; the comfort and edification
of his people; and the welfare, temporal
and eternal, of the human species. These
opportunities and advantages are commonly
called *talents*, from the parable which our
Lord spoke on this subject; and doubt-
less this portion of scripture, and that coin-
cident with it, relate entirely to the sub-
ject under consideration, and cannot rea-
sonably be thought to point out the method
of salvation, as if the improvement of *natural
powers or common grace* could merit or
procure *special grace*, as some have con-
fusedly argued. For, indeed, *special grace*
produces the inclination and disposition to
use *natural powers* and all other advanta-
ges, aright.

There are various endowments and op-
portunities, which may be improved to the
best purposes; but which wicked men

employ in gratifying their base lusts, to the
increase of their own guilt and the injury of
all around them; and which formal profes-
sors of religion, who harbour hard thoughts
of God and a secret dislike to his service,
bury, as it were, in the earth. Of these the
true disciple of Christ will avail himself;
and by occupying with the talent intrusted
to him, he will become as 'the light of the
world,' and 'the salt of the earth.' Every
one has some measure of these advantages
afforded him, according to the appointment
of Infinite Wisdom, which also assigns to
each person his station in the church and
in the community; and if a man profess the
gospel, the use he makes of these advanta-
ges is one of the most decisive tests, by
which the sincerity of that profession may
be ascertained; and the degree of his grace
estimated. But the improvement, and not
the number of his talents, will be consider-
ed in the decision: 'he that is faithful in
that which is least, is faithful also in much';
and whilst the servant, to whom
many talents have been intrusted, may be
more extensively useful, he that hath im-
proved a very small proportion will be
equally favoured by his Lord. The poor
widow's two mites may be more evidential
of sincere love and fervent zeal, than the
liberal donations of the affluent.

Every thing almost, which we are, or
possess, or meet with, may be considered as
a talent: for a good or bad use may be
made of all natural endowments or providen-
tial appointments; or they may remain
unoccupied through inactivity and selfish-
ness. Time, health, vigour of body, and
the power of exertion, and ability to endure
fatigue; the natural and acquired abilities of
the mind, skill in any lawful art or science;
and the capacity for close mental applica-
tion: the gift of speech, and that of speak-
ing with fluency and propriety, and in a
convincing, attractive, or persuasive man-
ner; wealth, influence, or authority; a
man's situation in the church, in the com-
munity, or in relative life; and the various
occurrences, which make way for him to
attempt any thing of a beneficial tendency;
these, and many others that can scarcely
be enumerated, are talents which the con-
sistent Christian will improve to the glory
of God and the benefit of mankind. Nay,
this improvement procures an increase of
talents, and gives a man an accession of in-
fluence, and an accumulating power of do-
ing good: because it tends to establish his
reputation for prudence, piety, integrity,
sincerity, and disinterested benevolence;
it gradually forms him to an habitual readi-
ness to engage in beneficent designs, and to
conduct them in a gentle, unobtrusive, and
unassuming manner; it disposes others to
regard him with increasing confidence and
affection, and to approach him with satis-
faction; and it procures for him the coun-
tenance of many persons, whose assistance
he can employ in accomplishing his own
salutary purposes. For, as far as we are
consistent in our views of our calling and
business in the world, we shall, both in the
concerns of our own salvation, and in en-
deavouring to be useful, imitate the skillful
mariner; who always keeps his port in
mind, and gets forward in his voyage, by
making use of every wind, and availing
himself to the utmost, of every circumstance
that arises from currents and tides, to ac-
complish his purpose. We shall, however,
obtain a more distinct view of the subject,
by selecting a specimen of these talents, and
the improvement of which they are cap-
able.

1. *Power and authority* constitute a most
important trust, committed by the Great
Ruler of the Universe to some of the hu-
man race for the benefit of the whole, and
of every individual, as far as consistent with
it. The Scripture represents all power as
originally derived from God; and all rulers
as the ministers of his providence in govern-
ing the world, who must render an account
to Him, both of the manner in which they
acquired dominion, and the way in which
they governed. Waiving, therefore, all
questions on these subjects, it suffices to say,
that too many, who in any way have exer-
cised authority over their brethren, have
made a very bad use of it. Ambition, vain-
glory, lust of dominion, rapacity, caprice,
envy, furious anger, or dire revenge, super-
stition, or impiety, have often influenced
them to employ the power intrusted to them,
in exciting and waging bloody wars, de-
structive to their subjects, as well as to for-
eigners; in oppressing and burdening the
poor, in favouring the exactions and op-
pressions which they ought to have crush-
ed; in protecting and advancing the men
whom they should have punished; in ha-
rassing those whom it was their duty to
have protected; or in persecuting their
peaceable subjects for their religious opin-
ions; and thus augmenting, by various
ways, the miseries which they were exal-
ed on purpose to remedy. There have al-
so been some, who, as princes or magis-
trates, have upon the whole behaved *neg-
atively* well: they have not waged unne-
cessary wars, or molested their subjects by
oppressions or persecutions; but have been
peaceably contented with the splendour,
dignity, and pleasures of their station, and
have left it to their servants to keep the
machine of government in motion. They

* Matt. v. 13-16.

† 2 Cor. viii. 7, 8. James ii. 24-26. 1 John
iii. 17-20.

‡ Luke xvi. 9-12.

